

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Please replace the attached Figure 1 for the Figure 1 filed on December 9, 2003. The Replacement Sheet of Figure 1 now has reference numeral 19 pointing to the semi-reflecting mirror in accordance with the specification

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified application are respectfully requested. Claims 15-16, 20, 35-36 and 40-45 remain pending in the application. Claims 35, 43 and 44 have been amended. Claim 45 is new.

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner has found allowable subject matter in claims 15, 20, 43 and 44. Claims 43 and 44 have been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim.

In response to the Applicants' election with traverse of invention II-A and species II-A-4, in the Official Action it is stated that "[t]here is not any new features/differences from the devices of the claim groups related to the mentioned components with respect to the prior art." The undersigned respectfully disagrees with this characterization of the claimed combinations. However, since the Examiner has now made the various restriction requirements final, there is no point in further discussing such issues in this response. Applicants reserve the right to petition this restriction requirement.

In response to the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) objections raised in the Official Action the Examiner is respectfully requested to review the Letter Re Objections to Information Disclosure Statement submitted on April 28, 2006. It is believed that this Letter addresses all of the IDS issues raised in the Official Action. If, however, there remain any difficulties with consideration of the cited documents, kindly contact the undersigned telephonically so that we can expedite resolution. Otherwise, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner confirm receipt of this Letter, acknowledge, review and send an initialed copy of the 1449 form.

In response to the objections to the drawings, a replacement sheet for Figure 1 is submitted herewith in which reference numeral 19 now points to the semi-reflecting mirror in accordance with the specification. Additionally, as correctly stated in the Official Action, the reference numeral 105 as shown in Figure 6 is not mentioned in the

specification. The specification has been amended accordingly by adding 105 after the word "leads" in line 27 on page 22.

In response to the objection to the Arrangement of the Specification, the specification has been amended herein to include the phrase "Summary of the Invention" after paragraph 2 on page 3 of the specification.

In response to the objections to the disclosure because of informalities, the reference numeral "37" in line 2 of page 16 has been amended to be "33", the reference numeral "45" has been deleted after "distance" in line 28 of page 16 and the reference numeral "103" in lines 25 and 28 of page 24 have been amended to be "133".

In response to the objection to claims 35-36 and 40-42, claim 35 has been amended by deleting the phrase "a light-guiding system for supplying light to the at least one light emitter".

Claims 35-36 and 40-42 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. It is respectfully submitted that the claim 35 amendment described above wherein the phrase "a light-guiding system for supplying light to the at least one light emitter" has been deleted, resolves this issue. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 35-36 and 40-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement are respectfully requested.

Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Hamada et al. (U.S. Patent Number 5,048,941). Prior to discussing this ground of rejection in detail, a brief summary of a surgical microscopy system according to exemplary embodiments of the present invention is provided below to highlight some of the advantageous characteristics thereof.

According to exemplary embodiments of the present invention, at least a mechanically supporting component of an arm of the stand is configured to form part of a current path to or from the device powered by electrical current. This current path provided by the mechanically supporting component of the arm of the stand then

replaces a conventionally provided current lead such that remaining forces exerted by this conventional current lead no longer exist. Additionally, this current path, which may be at ground potential, for instance is provided by supporting components of arms of the stand which are made of metal. In the joint, the axis of the joint and bearings for the same also provide sufficient electrical contact for current and/or data transmission since they are in immediate mechanical engagement with each other.

On the other hand, Hamada et al. (hereinafter "Hamada") describes a surgical microscope with a stand that is powered by wires. As correctly stated in the Official Action, "The stand (11) supports a plurality of connections mechanically attached to the stand so that the electrical current from the power sources (14a-c) are guided to the devices (13a-c) attached to the microscope body", however, this described embodiment is significantly different from Applicants' claim 16 combination. In Applicants' claim 16 combination it is stated, among other things, "wherein a mechanically supporting component of the stand is configured to form part of a current path to or from the device powered by electrical current." This element of Applicants' claim 16 combination is different from the embodiment described in Hamada because the electrical current in Hamada travels through flexible wires which is not the same as "a mechanically supporting component of the stand is configured to form part of a current path". In Hamada, the mechanical supporting components do not form part of the current path. Only in Applicants' claim 16 combination is it stated that "wherein a mechanically supporting component of the stand is configured to form part of a current path to or from the device powered by electrical current."

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Hamada et al. are respectfully requested.

All of the objections and rejections raised in the Office Action having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner have any

questions regarding this response or the application in general, he is invited to contact the undersigned at (540) 361-1863.

Respectfully submitted,

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